(d) if so, by when it is likely to be held;

(e) whether diplomat expulsion by Pakistan has undermined bilateral ties; and

(f) whether US has proofs of terrorist camp in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Pakistan continues to raise the Kashmir issue repeatedly at various international fora.

(b) to (d) Yes, There was a meeting between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan on the margins of the 27th Session of the SAARC Council of Ministers held in Dhaka on 31 July - 2 August, 2006. India has conveyed to Pakistan that the dialogue process between the two countries can be sustained and carried forward only if Pakistan takes effective action to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, including training camps, launch pads and communication links between terrorist groups,on the Indian side and their handlers on the Pakistan side. The Foreign Secretary level talks will take place at an appropriate time. No dates have been fixed yet for these talks.

(e) Ministry of External Affairs has made it clear that the expulsion of an Indian Diplomat by the Government of Pakistan could not but undermine the bilateral relations between the two countries.

(f) According to the *Country Reports on Terrorism*, released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism of the United States of America on 28 April, 2006, Pakistan continued to pursue Al-Qaida, the Taliban and their allies aggressively with counterterrorist police measures. There were extensive U.S.-Pakistani joint counterterrorism efforts which included cooperative efforts in border security and criminal investigations and several long-term training projects. Although Pakistan had "promised to shut down known terrorist relief camps, but nonetheless several such groups were able to raise funds and reap public relations benefits" after the earthquake of October, 2005.

Applications pending in passport offices

2938. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passport applications pending in passport offices;

(b) the name of the passport office which cleared the record number of applications; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to simplify the procedure and further obtaining the time for clearing the applications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Details of pending passport applications at various passport offices are given in Statement I (*See* below).

(b) Regional Passport Office, Chennai cleared the record number of applications by issuing 1,63,527 passports during the period January to July, 2006.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Government has been continually taking measures to further simplify the procedure and clear the pending applications in an expeditious manner. The details are given in Statement II.

Statement-I

Details of Pending Passport Applications

Sl.No.	Name of Passport Office	Total number of Passport applications pending as on July 2006	Out of these how many applications are pending for want of police report
1	2	3	4
1.	Ahmedabad	20103	7620
2.	Bangalore	13096	10150
3.	Bareilly	9391	695
4.	Bhopal	18772	9756
5.	Bhubaneswar	20312	7218
6.	Chandigarh	36514	23845
7.	Chennai	45863	18568
8.	Cochin	14072	2620
9.	Delhi	8635	3670
10.	Ghaziabad	17687	9509
11.	Guwahati	4386	3064
12.	Hyderabad	13732	13732
13.	Jaipur	66660	39987
14.	Jalandhar	30087	27102

1	2	3	4
15.	Jammu	8052	5033
16.	Kolkata	22257	21056
17.	Kozhikode	30196	9828
18.	Lucknow	76633	37365
19.	Mumbai	18649	15183
20.	Nagpur	4339	2657
21.	Panaji	1834	523
22.	Patna	46334	41618
23.	Pune	10593	8541
24.	Ranchi	15614	11026
25.	Srinagar	14557	12878
26.	Surat	2527	2193
27.	Thane	6896	5747
28.	Tiruchirappalli	62446	28071
29.	Thiruvananthapuram	12584	1327
30.	Visakhapatnam	9613	1369
	TOTAL:	662464	381951

Statement -II

Details of simplifying the procedure and further obtaining the time for clearing the applications

The Government has been reviewing from time to time the passport issuance process to make it speedier and applicant friendly. A number of steps have been taken recently to simplify the process. These include.

I. Process re-engineering has been introduced in certain Passport Offices. Under this process, some activities have been discontinued or clubbed in order to reduce the processing time. As a result, the process of granting of the files by the officers (*i.e.*, the approval for issuance of passport) is done at the counter itself.

II. The specified time period under Tatkal has been reduced from 1-10 days and 11-35 days to 1-10 days and 11-20 days respectively. It has also been decided to issue full 10 year validity passports on production of verification certificate under Tatkal Scheme.

III. Similarly, the specified time period for reissue of passports has been brought down from 1-10 days to 1-3 days.

IV. Special drives were recently undertaken in Passport Offices in Ghaziabad, Chandigarh, Delhi, Hyderabad, Patna and Kozhikode to clear pending applications, thereby reducing the issuance time.

V. Pendency is monitored across all Passport Offices on a fortnightly basis.

VI. The State Governments have been requested to dispatch the police verification reports in two weeks.

VII. Enhancement of output in issuance of passports by use of computerization of passport offices for processing passport applications and introduction of machine printers for preparation of passports.

VIII. The submission of applications has been decentralized for the convenience of the applicants and to expedite police verifications. Under this scheme, passport applications are also received at District level in the District Passport Cells (DPCs) located in the office of District Magistrate or Superintendent of Police (as decided by the respective State Government). In addition, they are also received at designated Speed Post Centres and Passport Application Collection Centres in various States.

IX. Under the newly-implemented Bangalore-1 project, passport applications are received at 15 centres spread all over Bangalore City for the convenience of passport applicants.

X. Introduction of on-line registration for passport applicants in New Delhi with effect from 9th August, 2006.

XI. A Central Public Grievance Monitoring Cell has been set up for quick redressal of grievances.

2. Additional steps are proposed to be taken to further simplify and streamline the procedure for issue of passports, which are:

(a) Widening the network of Speed Post Centres to collect/receive passport applications from the present 218 centres to more than 1000 centres by September, 2006;

(b) Augmentation of Staff to reduce and clear pendencies; and

(c) Simplification of the procedure to establish identify/nationality of the passport applicant.

VAMBAY in Karnataka

2939. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) in Karnataka in the last three years; and

(b) whether his Ministry has any programme for Education of Urban Poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) Since the inception of Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) in 2001-02 Government of India (GOI) subsidy amounting to Rs. 90.06 crore has been released to the State of Karnataka to implement 7 schemes under VAMBAY. Year-wise details are as follows:—

Year	GoI subsidy released (Rs. in crore)	Dwelling Units covered	Toilet Seats covered
2001-02	9.15	3333	575
2002-03	19.67	6979	2215
2003-04	39.44	14978	3090
2004-05	4.06	0	2030
2005-06	17.74	7992	0
TOTAL:	90.06	33282	7910

(b) No, Sir.

Rising cost of living in towns

2940. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cost of living in towns has been increasing more than 10 per cent yearly for the last more than four years;